

Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
(727) 570-5305; FAX (727) 570-5583
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

F/SER23:PS

MEMORANDUM FOR: Wayne Swingle, Executive Director
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

FROM: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator

SUBJECT: Quota Monitoring Procedures for Shallow-Water and Deep-Water
Grouper

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) has established the following procedures for monitoring commercial landings for the shallow-water and deep-water grouper fisheries in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico:

Purpose

To provide the aggregate quantity of pounds, in gutted weight, for all species in the deep-water and shallow-water grouper management units, and to provide the quantity of pounds, in gutted weight, for red grouper that are submitted by seafood dealers selected to report to the grouper quota monitoring program.

Contact

The program is administered by John Poffenberger and Mike Judge, Sustainable Fisheries Division, SEFSC, Miami, Florida.

Background

On January 31, 2003, I requested the SEFSC to establish a quota monitoring program for both the shallow-water and deep-water grouper fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. In response to this request, the SEFSC established a new data collection program requiring seafood dealers to submit monthly total landings for all species in these two fisheries.

The new data collection program required approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In the supporting documentation for the Paperwork Reduction Act submitted to OMB, the SEFSC described the methods to be used to collect the necessary landings data. The objective of the program is to provide accurate information in a timely manner. Directives from OMB are to limit the amount of burden placed on the public by federal reporting programs. Therefore, the SEFSC developed a plan that will provide a sufficient percentage of the total landings, but will not place an unnecessary reporting burden on all of the dealers that handle species in these two fisheries. The 2002 landings for shallow-water and deep-water grouper were

used to determine how many dealers would be required to report. During 2002, a total of 286 dealers reported purchases of some quantity of the species in the deep-water and shallow-water grouper complexes. In order to account for at least 90% of the total landings, reporting by 80 to 90 dealers was determined to be needed to account for all landings. Thus, the SEFSC selected 86 dealers with the largest amount of grouper purchased during 2002 to participate in the quota monitoring program.

Approval from OMB was received in July 2003 and the SEFSC initiated the quota monitoring program in August 2003. The selected dealers are required to submit the monthly purchases of the 13 species in these two fisheries (8 species in the shallow-water grouper fishery and 5 species in the deep-water grouper fishery). See Appendix I for the species in the two grouper fisheries.

Procedures

1. The initial dealer selection was made in August 2003 and dealer reporting began in September 2003.
2. The data collection form approved by OMB (Appendix II) was mailed to the selected dealers. Dealers are required to summarize the monthly purchases of each of the 13 species of grouper and record these quantities on the reporting form. Dealers are instructed to designate whether the purchases are in whole (round) or gutted weights. The dealers are required to return the completed form by the 5th of the following month. They have the option of mailing the form (postage paid envelopes are provided), or sending the form via fax to the SEFSC. Special provisions are provided to those dealers that are reporting electronically to the respective state. If dealers report electronically and the SEFSC has access to the electronic data, these dealers are not required to submit a paper form.
3. When reporting forms are received, they are entered into a database for review and analysis by the SEFSC. Dealers not reporting by the 10th of the month, are sent a follow-up letter requesting the landings for the previous month. An additional five days are included to allow for those dealers that submitted their forms by mail. If a dealer did not purchase any grouper species during the calendar month, the dealer is required to submit a form stating no purchases were made.
4. When the SEFSC determines all data are received for a month, a report is prepared and submitted to the Southeast Regional Office. This report includes the monthly landings for deep-water and shallow-water grouper fisheries. The report also includes the monthly landings of red grouper separate from the shallow-water grouper landings. Because a separate quota has been proposed for red grouper, landings of this species need to be monitored independently from the total shallow-water grouper fishery. The SEFSC also includes “adjustment” factors that will be applied to the reported landings to provide an estimate of the total landings for the month. Because only a portion of the dealers are selected to report, the adjustment is used to account for the dealers that are not selected. The “adjustment” factors are re-evaluated when the landings for the quota monitoring program are compared to the general canvas landings statistics reported to

the state programs (see #5 below).

5. Periodically, quota monitoring data are compared to the general canvas landings statistics reported by the dealers to the state fishery agencies to determine if the dealers selected by the SEFSC continue to provide an acceptable percentage of the total reported landings. This periodic comparison is critical because fishermen constantly change the dealers to whom they sell fish. If the SEFSC finds dealers that have purchases of more than 1,000 pounds of grouper per month and are not among the dealers already selected, the SEFSC will then select those dealers to participate in the quota monitoring program. Comparisons were made between the landings reported by dealers and data from the general canvas landings statistics for October and November 2003. Based on the comparisons for those two months, the SEFSC received 83% and 87% of the total landings of all shallow-water and deep-water groupers, respectively, compared to the general canvas landings statistics. Furthermore, the SEFSC received data for 83% and 86% of the total red grouper landings compared to the general canvas statistics. Thus, the SEFSC is using an adjustment of 15% for all shallow-water and deep-water grouper and an adjustment of 17% for red grouper. Landings summaries for shallow-water grouper, deep-water grouper, and red grouper will be provided to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council on a monthly basis and are now posted on the Southeast Regional Office web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

Appendix I

Shallow-water grouper species

Red grouper
Black grouper
Gag grouper
Scamp
Yellowmouth grouper
Yellowfin grouper
Rock hind
Red hind

Deep-water grouper species

Yellowedge grouper
Misty grouper
Snowy grouper
Warsaw grouper
Speckled hind

Appendix II

MONTHLY DEALER REPORTING FOR GROUPER QUOTA MONITORING

FEDERAL

DEALER NAME: _____ **PERMIT NO. DL-** _____

REPORTING

BUSINESS LOCATION COUNTY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **MONTH:** _____ / _____

Month Year

Write the amount (pounds) for each species purchased during the reporting month (do not include purchases from other dealer or imported fish). If no purchases were made, check the box at the bottom.

SHALLOW WATER GROUPERS

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>ROUND WEIGHT</u>	<u>GUTTED WEIGHT</u>
Black Grouper	_____	_____
Gag Grouper	_____	_____
Red Grouper	_____	_____
Yellowfin Grouper	_____	_____
Scamp	_____	_____
Red Hind	_____	_____
Rock Hind	_____	_____
Yellowmouth Grouper	_____	_____

DEEP WATER GROUPERS

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>ROUND WEIGHT</u>	<u>GUTTED WEIGHT</u>
Snowy Grouper	_____	_____
Misty Grouper	_____	_____
Yellowedge Grouper	_____	_____
Warsaw Grouper	_____	_____
Speckled Hind	_____	_____

☐

NO PURCHASES FOR ANY OF THE ABOVE SPECIES WERE MADE DURING THIS MONTH.

Submitted by: Name (please print) _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / 200__

Mail reports to: Michael Judge
National Marine Fisheries Service
75 Virginia Beach Drive
Miami, FL 33149

Fax Reports to: Michael Judge
305/361-4460

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